

(g) If requested, the Service may conduct an informal public hearing after publishing 30 days' advance notice of the date, location, and time of such hearing in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(h) After considering all comments and other relevant information, the Service shall publish in the FEDERAL REGISTER its final determination on whether the state has developed and will implement a management program that meets the requirement of the Act and these regulations. In the case of a positive final determination, the Service shall publish with the notice a final regulation transferring management authority for the species to the state after the following requirements are satisfied:

(1) The state's determinations pursuant to § 403.04 of this part are final and implemented under state law;

(2) Any cooperative allocation agreement required under § 403.05(a) of this part is implemented; and

(3) The state has enacted and submitted to the Service laws and policies that are substantially the same as those provided pursuant to § 403.03(a) in proposed form in the state's management program.

§ 403.04 Determinations and hearings under section 109(c) of the MMPA.

(a) *Introduction.* In order to gain approval of its marine mammal management program the state must provide for a process, consistent with section 109(c) of the Act, to determine the optimum sustainable population of the species and the maximum number of animals that may be taken from populations it manages without reducing the species below OSP. The state process must be completed before the state may exercise any management authority over the subject marine mammals, and it must include the elements set forth below.

(b) *Basis, purpose, and scope.* The process set forth in this section is applicable to and required for only the determination of the OSP of the species and maximum number that may be taken without reducing it below its OSP and, in the case of Alaska if the species is below OSP, the maximum number of animals that may be taken, if any, for subsistence uses without

preventing the species from increasing toward its OSP. The state need not allow the maximum take, as determined in accordance with this process, that is biologically permissible. The state may change regulations establishing bag limits, quotas, seasons, areas, manner of take, etc. within the maximum biologically permissible take pursuant to its other rulemaking criteria, authority, and procedures. Compliance with the process set forth in this section would not be required again unless the state proposes to modify its determinations of the status of the species with respect to its OSP or the maximum permissible take from that species.

(c) *Initial determination by the State.* The state agency with responsibility for managing the species in the event management authority is transferred to the state shall make initial determinations on the basis of the best scientific evidence available of:

(1) Whether or not it is at its OSP; (2) if so, the maximum number of that species that may be taken without reducing it below its OSP; and (3) if not, in the case of Alaska, the maximum number of animals that may be taken, if any, for subsistence uses without preventing the species from increasing toward its OSP.

(d) *Notice and review of initial determinations and request for hearing.* The state agency shall provide notice of its initial determinations to the Service and the public and shall provide access to or copies of the documentation supporting its determinations to the Service and the public. The state agency shall indicate, in the notice of its initial determinations, the location(s) and hours during which such documentation may be inspected, and the costs, if any of copies of such documentation. The state agency shall also indicate in the notice that any interested person may request a hearing regarding the initial determinations, and the state shall provide a reasonable time, not less than 30 days, for making the request, taking into account the time required to advise the public of the initial determinations and to make the supporting documentation readily available to interested persons for their consideration. If a request for a

hearing is not made within the prescribed time period, the initial determinations shall be treated as final.

(e) *Notice of hearing.* If a request for a hearing is made within the prescribed time period by any interested person, the state agency shall provide notice of the hearing to the Service and the public not less than 30 days in advance of the scheduled date(s) of the hearing(s). The notice shall include the date(s), location(s), and purpose of the hearing, a recitation of the initial determinations, the name(s) of the person(s) who will preside at the hearing, and the manner and date by which interested persons must notify the state agency or presiding officer(s) of their desire to participate in the hearing. The state shall also make available and distribute upon request a list of witnesses and description of the documentation and other evidence that will be relied upon by the state's witnesses in support of its initial determinations sufficiently in advance of the hearing date so as to allow interested persons to prepare questions and supporting or rebuttal testimony for the hearing.

(f) *Conduct of the hearing.* (1) The hearing shall be publicly conducted and reported verbatim by an official reporter.

(2) The state shall sponsor all written documentation in support of its determinations with witnesses who are able, by virtue of training and experience, to respond fully to cross-examination regarding the facts and conclusions contained therein provided that, except by agreement of the parties, the state agency may not call any witnesses or introduce any documentation into the record unless the advance notice requirements of paragraph (e) of this section are met with respect to such witnesses or documentation.

(3) Any interested person who has notified the state agency of his desire to participate in the hearing pursuant to paragraph (e) of this section may participate in the hearing by presenting oral or written testimony or cross-examining the witnesses or other parties with respect to matters relevant to the state's initial determinations, provided that any such written documentation must be sponsored by a witness who is able, by virtue of train-

ing and experience, to respond fully to cross-examination regarding the facts and conclusions contained therein.

(4) The presiding officer(s) shall conduct the hearing in accordance with such other rules of evidence, criteria, and procedures as are necessary and appropriate for the expeditious and effective determination of the issues. The presiding officer(s) may provide for oral argument and/or written briefs at the end of the hearing.

(5) Final determinations on the issues specified in paragraph (c) of this section must be supported by the best available scientific information so as to insure that any taking will be consistent with the maintenance of OSP.

(g) *Review of the hearing record and final determinations.* (1) The state agency shall provide for either:

(i) Review and evaluation of the hearing record by the presiding officer(s) and transmittal by the presiding officer(s) of recommended final determinations to the decision-maker(s) in the state agency; or

(ii) Review and evaluation of the hearing record and final determinations by the state agency without benefit of any recommendations by the presiding officer(s). In any event, the final determinations by the state agency must be made solely on the basis of the record developed at the hearing. The state agency in making its final determinations, and/or presiding officer(s) in making his (their) recommended determinations, may not rely on oral or written evidence which was not presented at the hearing and made available to the parties for cross-examination and rebuttal testimony. Any such oral or written information transmitted to the presiding officer(s) or other members of the state agency responsible for the final determinations shall be treated as *ex parte* communications and may not be considered part of the record for decision.

(2) The state agency shall make final determinations of the issues set forth in paragraph (c) of this section and shall include in its statement of final determinations a statement of findings and conclusions and the reasons or basis therefor.

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(3) The state agency shall advise the Service and the public of its final determinations and shall provide access to or copies of its decision document and Hearing Record.

(h) *Judicial review.* The state agency's final determinations after a hearing must be supported by substantial evidence in the record of the hearing. Opportunity for judicial review of the state agency's final determinations must be available under state law. The scope of judicial review shall be equivalent to that provided for in 5 U.S.C. 706(2) (A) through (E).

§ 403.05 State and Federal responsibilities after transfer of management authority.

(a) After determinations required by section 403.04 of this part have been made in respect to a species whose range extends beyond the territorial waters of the state, the state shall not exercise management authority until a cooperative allocation agreement with the Secretary has been signed and the Service has transferred management authority pursuant to § 403.03(h). The cooperative allocation agreement shall provide procedures for allocating, on a timely basis, the maximum amount of take as determined by the state pursuant to § 403.04 of this part. Such allocation shall give first priority to incidental take within the zone described in section 3(14)(B) of the Act as provided for under section 101(a) of the Act, except that in the case of Alaska, first priority shall be given to subsistence use.

(b) For those species to which paragraph (a) of this section applies, the state may request the Service to regulate the taking of the species within the zone described in section 3(14)(B) of the Act for subsistence uses and/or hunting in a manner consistent with the regulation by the state of such taking within the state. If such a request is made, the Service shall adopt and enforce within such zone, such of the state's regulatory provisions as the Service considers to be consistent with the administration within such zone of section 101(a) of the Act.

(c) If management authority for a species has been transferred to a state pursuant to this subpart, the Service

shall provide to the state an opportunity to review all requests for permits to remove live animals from habitat within the state for scientific research or public display purposes. If the state finds that issuance of the permit would not be consistent with its management program for the species:

(1) The state shall so inform the Service, together with the reasons for such finding, within 30 days of its receipt of the application, and the Service shall not issue the permit; and

(2) The Service shall provide to the permit applicant and the state an opportunity to adjust the permit application or otherwise reconcile it with the state management program for the species.

(d) After management of a species has been transferred to the state, state and Federal authorities shall cooperate to the maximum extent practicable in conserving the species of marine mammals.

§ 403.06 Monitoring and review of State management program.

(a) The Service has responsibility to monitor and review implementation of all state management programs approved pursuant to this part.

(b) In order to facilitate such review, each state to which management authority has been transferred shall submit an annual report, not later than 120 days after the close of such state's first full fiscal or calendar year following the effective date of the Service's approval of the State management program, and at the same time each following year, or at such other time as may be agreed upon. The report shall contain the following information current for each reporting period:

(1) Any changes in the state laws which comprise those aspects of the state management program submitted pursuant to § 403.03(b), and, in the case of Alaska, § 403.03(d), of this part;

(2) Pertinent new data on the marine mammal species or the marine ecosystems in question including a summary of the status, trend and general health of the species;

(3) A summary of available information relating to takings under the state management program;